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HOUSE BILL 2135

By Cooper B

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 37-3-703 and Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 50, relative to health screening of children.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 50, is amended by adding the following as a new, appropriately designated section:

SECTION \_\_\_\_ (a) The department of health shall create a plan to require vision screening for Tennessee children. The department shall provide a report summarizing such plan by January 15, 2001, which report shall be provided to the members of the house health and human resources committee, the senate general welfare committee, the select joint committee on children and youth, the house children and family affairs committee, and the TennCare oversight committee. Thereafter, by January 15 of each year, the department shall report to such members regarding rates of vision screening by county and improvements or changes made during the preceding year.

(b) The department shall, by January 15, 2001, also promulgate the necessary rules to make such vision screening a prerequisite for admission to any public school,

kindergarten, nursery school, preschool or child care facility, except as expressly provided herein, for the 2002 school year.

(c) Such report and rules shall include, among others, development of form(s) to be signed by appropriate health care providers for establishing proof of vision screening; shall provide an exception from vision screening based upon religious objections, where such screening conflicts with the parent or guardian's religious tenets and practices; shall, if medically appropriate, provide a medical exception where a qualified health care professional certifies that administration of such vision screening is medically inappropriate or in any manner harmful for the child involved; and shall provide for monitoring processes.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 37-3-703(c), is amended by adding the following as new subdivisions to be appropriately numbered:

- ( ) All of the children receive hearing screening by six (6) months of age;
- ( ) All of the children receive vision screening by three (3) years of age;

SECTION 3. This act shall become effective upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.